



Phoenix

Borderland

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Phoenix

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~

“There is universality in every project, insamuch as any man is capable of understanding any human project.”
Existentialism is a Humanism,
Jean-Paul Sartre



Logo by Shiyon Mathew

WELCOME BACK

Last year was a big year for *Phoenix*. After years of continuous publication, it at last made the move into the digital world — not as a replacement of but as a supplement to its print existence. And what an impressive supplement it was.

From September through April, the editors published three e-Newsletters of fiction, poetry, essays, and art. These rich compendia were sent to every member of the CNR community, from Brooklyn to Co-op City to the main campus in New Rochelle. Then came May and an end-of-year issue still brimming with innovative work, not only from students but from staff, faculty, and alumnae/i.

The purpose of all this activity, as the editors conceived of it, was twofold. First, it was to broaden the opportunity for creative expression at CNR: to give more people more chances to present their work to a wide, receptive audience. But it was even more so an effort to strengthen and uphold the importance of creative expression at CNR. The editors at the helm of *Phoenix* believe passionately that literature and the arts should suffuse the life of the college, and they have been working very hard in the service of that ideal.

This publication — the first of the 2013-2014 academic year — marks the continuation of their efforts and will, I hope and expect, inspire those who receive it in numerous ways: as readers, as learners, as thinkers and questioners, as writers and as artists. It will also, I hope, inspire many more to contribute to the endeavor. The more who participate, the higher and farther the *Phoenix* will fly. Ω

Daniel Smith, Mary Ellen Donnelly Critchlow
Endowed Chair in English

WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR? *PHOENIX* 2012-2013

August 2012: Plans are made for the publication of a bimonthly e-Newsletter. During LEEP, the *Phoenix* E-board meets to discuss a game plan and goals for the year.

September 2012: *Phoenix* meets with its staff writers and editors of the year: Regina Alvarado, Alyssa Capriglione, Genevieve Fleckenstein, Amelia Ellis, Shiyon Mathew, and Tazmin Uddin.

October 2012: The first ever *Phoenix* e-Newsletter, “GHOTI,” is released to the entire CNR Community.

November 2012: *Phoenix* hosts its creative writing workshop, “Sticky Bun Sessions.”

December 2012: *Phoenix* releases its second e-Newsletter, “The Person of Interest.”

February 2013: *Phoenix* releases its specialty e-Newsletter for Valentine’s Day, “Letters to the Beloved.” Nacre Coleman joins the editorial board. *Phoenix* hosts its second Sticky Bun Session. The turn-out for the event left all of the baked goods eaten, and plates, clean.

March 2013: *Phoenix* hosts “Monkey Mind,” a discussion about anxiety based on *Monkey Mind: A Memoir of Anxiety*, advisor Mr. Daniel Smith’s *New York Times*-bestselling memoir.

April 2013: *Phoenix* releases its end-of-year print publication, *Phoenix 2013*. The release party brought students, faculty, and CNR alumnae/i together for a night of reading and saying goodbye to senior staffers: Alyssa Capriglione, Genevieve Fleckenstein, and Shiyon Mathew.

ODE to the BOHEMIAN

Regina Alvarado

Hannah Arendt writes in her work *The Human Condition* that people can be classified in a hierarchal manner as those who labor, those who work, and those who take action.

Those who take action are often those in power and have authority. These people are celebrated for contributing to society. As children we are conditioned to want to belong to those that "take action." We are told we must do well in school in order to get into a good college, so we can then move on to enter the work force, become economically stable, and contribute to society. However, we are consistently reminded that this is the worst time to graduate from college, as there are too few jobs available and too many people. Are we, conditioned to desire an unattainable call to action, being set up to fail? Would we be truly taking action, or simply laboring in our constraining society? One must wonder if there *is* a universal call to action.

Being an artist is taking action. Now more than ever we are forgetting what it means to live in a rich artistic culture. We are oppressed by images of violence and sexuality that only speak to our animalistic qualities, numbing us to our desire for Beau-

ty and Truth.

I call upon the members of my generation to start a cultural revolution where the highest call to action is not simply making enough money to get by, but rather to further enriches the world we live in. We need to create art that inspires, or at the very least, supports those who dare to become musicians and poets.

What does it mean to be an artist in a world that no longer seems to consider this virtue valuable? Art museums and concert halls dependent on patron contributions are forced to shutdown due to lack of support. Art programs are being cut out of public schools. The vast majority of new artistic media is created solely on the basis of creating profit and scandal such as *Fifty Shades of Grey* or Robin Thicke's song "Blurred Lines."

This piece intends to celebrate those who chose a different path, those who take action by contributing to culture in a way that society no longer deems relevant; the artists, musicians, and poets who create and transcend beauty while many others go through the mechanics of life. That is to say, the poet is as valuable as the lawyer, as is the musician and the policeman.

Where would our world be without Shakespeare, Beethoven, Keats, and their brilliant artistic minds? Ω

To AUTUMN

John Keats

1

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease.
For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

2

Who hath not seen thee soft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

3

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river shallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Nacre Coleman

I try not to hate, but the feelings are just as strong.
It's the opposite of what God is and I know that it is wrong.
You never wanted my existence to be known to the world,
even before they declared that "it's a baby girl."

You left me alone to fend for myself,
without any love, patience, or wealth.

You chastised me like you honestly cared,
but all of those other times you forgot that I was there.

I've made numerous attempts to make you realize
that your absence has done nothing but paralyze
my past, my dreams, and my present being,
but you brushed it off as some desperate "kiddy" thing.

I've cried and tried to make you realize
that it is not a joke, but you laughed somehow,
as if you threw a pie in my face, because I was the clown. No.

It's the other way around, and you are the fool
as you rant and rave about how I've done in school
but, you weren't there in the wee hours of the night
as I'm at others' houses to print and write my homework.

You've always been the one to claim what's not yours
and that's a poor habit I've picked up on my own.

By searching for another to fill your position,
I made a very emotional decision.

I selected the ideal representation
of what I thought you should be, but
in realizing that in life, this could never be.

He could never do the things you were supposed to do,
he could never say the things you were supposed to say.

But you just can't live up to the fact
that you are the reason for my pain,
the reason why I hurt, cry, and hate.

Hate is the opposite of God and I know it's wrong.

I guess you taught me that much, no wait...
that wasn't you, it was HIM.

BIG STEPS

PART I

Siobhan Bonilla

She scoured her room over three times, collecting everything she owned: pictures of the ones dear to her; clothes to last her for months; and money. She had been scrubbing Ms. Walker's floor for over five years. Her \$2.50 an hour allowed her to save for moments like this. The blisters on her feet and knees were living proof. The struggle for her dream. The dream to be somebody and to own something.

Daley Simmons finished packing and looked at her empty room, the vibrancy and life in the room was gone. No more pink banners.... She turned around and gazed into the mirror. Her dark skin, bold eyes, and lengthy hair were just fine; her pink, silk dress and black shoes accentuated her hips. Some people called her heavy, but she thought she was just right. This would be the last time she struggled. She promised Grandpa Joe that she would be more than what North Carolina could offer a young, southern woman. Grandpa Joe died just a week earlier. Daley remembered her conversation with Grandpa Joe on the family's front porch.

"Daley, you see dis' land here?" He looked around the fifty acres of grassland in front of him. "Yo grandmammy and I built it. For you, yo daddy, and when yo daddy married yo momma and had yo siblings." Daley listened and watched him stare at the land before him. "The land'll always be here, but don't die here."

"But Grandpa, momma's expectin' me ta marry Freddy Jackson."

Freddy Jackson was the son of Daniel Jackson, the local farmer. The Jacksons owned the house up the street where their farming business had been in operation for years. Daley did not want to marry Freddy: she didn't want to become a part of something that had already belonged to a man. She wanted something of her own, and even with Freddy's promises of a good life, the thought of being a locked-down housewife didn't ease her mind. She refused to settle.



"Yo momma can't give you the life she wanted fa' herself. In time she will be all right. Start livin' fa' yourself."

She watched Grandpa Joe smoke his last cigar pipe. He was sick with a bad heart, but continued to smoke. She held her own cigarette in her hand and watched the smoke escape her mouth. They watched the sun go down. He was a hard worker, a sharecropper for years before he married her grandmother, who had been dead for three years. The eldest out of ten siblings, Grandpa Joe had to become a man the day his father walked out on them. Yes, he knew what it was like to work hard.

Grandpa Joe adored his granddaughter for her ambition to explore and want more out of life. Luckily, Daley did not experience life as hard as he did. Grandpa Joe had a heart attack a week later. Daley watched the coffin go down into the grave. She shed one tear.

Daley was the oldest of six siblings. She had four brothers and a younger sister: Junior, Dakota, Roy, Gerald, and Alexandria, all dear to her heart. She looked at them eating dinner with the parents. She needed to leave.

"Ma, Pa, I am leaving for New York in a few days." She looked down at her plate of food as she spoke. Her mother didn't look happy, her father seemed surprised.

"Daley, with all these Civil Rights marches carryin' about? Yo ain't going anywhere. Yo supposed ta' be marryin' Freddy," said her mother.

“Momma, I don’t want ta’ marry him. I wanna own something of my own first. Not marry what ain’t mines.”

“Yo only 20 Daley. Who’s gonna give yo property ta own? Besides, New York ain’t no place for a small time peoples like us.”

“Momma, I’ve been workin, saving. I manage.”

Her mother looked to her father, hoping that he would side with her instead of Daley. “Jerry, ya hear dis? The neighbor’s daughter, Janet, is married and already havin’ they first baby. Why can’t she get married like all da other girls and raise a home like I did?”

Daley’s father looked at her solemnly. He knew that his father influenced Daley to leave North Carolina and be all that she could be. He knew that change came with an abundance of ambition, and Daley had it just like Grandpa Joe. He watched his father sweat blood and tears for the land they owned, and he was proud to be part of that.

“Well now, Barbara, she don’t want ta’ marry now. Let the girl go on.”

Barbara wanted Daley to be typical. She wanted her daughter to live the traditional southern lifestyle. In her daughter’s eyes, that meant being a slave, and Daley wanted better. Daley watched her mother walk away from the dinner table. Her father smiled at her and held her hand.

“Yo Momma just wants ya ta be okay. Go on ‘head and go to New York. Be somebody.”

Daley looked at her siblings. They ate their food, gripping their pieces of fried chicken. They were young at heart, but she was praying that as they got older, they would understand the reasons for her leaving.

“When ya leaving?”

“I was thinkin’ next week, pa.”

“I knows yo granddaddy wouldn’t wantcha here longa than that.”

Daley looked at her room for the last time. The emptiness made her eyes well up. She grabbed her bags and left her room. The house was quiet. The kitchen was empty. The wooden table and chairs with its magnificent decorations stood quietly. She walked slowly past the kitchen. She

walked through the living room looking at the matching leather black-and-gold couches next to the fireplace. She imagined sitting there during winter nights, listening to Grandpa Joe’s rendition of *A Christmas Carol*. He used to tell the old English tale as if it happened in Greensboro, North Carolina.

She walked out of her house and didn’t look back. She didn’t want her family to see her off. When her parents and siblings came back from the Summer Festival, she would be gone. She left them a letter in the mailbox stating where she would be, promising to visit during the Holiday Season. She was going to miss them, but this was something she had to do.

The July hot wind swept across her face as she walked out of her yard gate. The date on her ticket read: July 4, 1955. Departure 12:30p.m to Harlem, New York City. She had half an hour to catch the bus. Her feet were moving forward, her body intact. Ω

PART II WILL BE PUBLISHED IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.

“I dedicate Big Steps to those young women out there who need an escape and are bold enough to take it when an opportunity arises. I dedicate this to the long walks that seem never to end, but always have a light at the finish line. I dedicate this to my friends here at The College of New Rochelle for being that escape from the endless path. Thank you for your friendship and love.”

Siobhan Bonilla

FOOLS WILL HAVE THEIR INHERITANCE

Amelia Ellis

The Virginia Woolf Seminar was assigned to read Mrs. Dalloway, a book described by Professor Nick Smart as one of the best works of modernist literature. I read about the “leaden circles” that dissolve in the air; I read of the foolishness of Richard Dalloway buying flowers for Clarissa, when, from the start, Clarissa said she would buy flowers herself. I read a stirring attempt to forget something awful and to move on. For Clarissa, she seems to follow the words of Marcus Aurelius: “You have the power to recover your life. To do so you need to look at things as you once did.” Clarissa looks at life as a thing to be celebrated, to throw parties for – but as I read Clarissa’s attempts to relive and celebrate life, I couldn’t help but be skeptical of her love for life. And then, in Woolfian fashion, my mind began to wander toward something else...

The question I want to ask is: what will we give to our children? They are the future of this planet—the planet we are supposed to make a better place. What will we give them? Hope? Chaos? A chance to have opportunities we may have dreamed of, but could never achieve? Will we live through them? Will we educate them with fire, or with a gentle hand? Will we send them away to learn of the bureaucracy of inequality, to learn that an education only belongs to those who can afford it? Will we teach the unborn generation that they should feel a need to crawl back into the womb and become unborn again? Should we show in the exhausted lines carved around our mouths and around our eyes that we feel guilty for possessing a naïve hope that maybe life can be better than it is?

Wanting to enjoy life makes ambitions of changing the world invaluable—perhaps there is a selfish reasoning behind this, “no one wants to die,” and one’s setting and country should be conducive to living comfortably. So we do our best to make the changes in government or lifestyle that better suit us. But this is done to make life more easily enjoyed. It makes our small splash of water on a giant wildfire all the more important. But how could one enjoy life in the face of the Syrian crisis, threats of nuclear attack from North Korea, violent shootings across the United States, Greece placing foreigners into detention camps under inhumane conditions, and Russia calling anyone who associates with LGBTQA a blasphemer, a crime worth years in prison? “Such fools we are...For

Heaven only knows why one loves it so, how one sees it so, making it up, building it round one, tumbling it, creating it every moment afresh...”(Woolf, 6). *Mrs. Dalloway* was written after London experienced the devastating effects of World War I. An entire generation of young men were lost, the chemical warfare used by the German army proved to be one of the worst forms of warfare; culture was bombed to ruins. No one could rightfully blame the country who triggered the war—Archduke Ferdinand was shot, but how could this be the cause of war? Europe had fallen to pieces.

In TS Eliot’s “The Waste Land,” the dead who have been buried seem to face the possibility of disturbance: ““Oh keep the Dog, far hence, that’s friend to men/ Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!”” Keep the Dog away from the dead; do not revisit the dead; keep them buried, do not remind the world of death; do not let Destruction find man once again. Eliot’s character directs this line to a hypocrite. Woolf, however, would direct it to fools; as characters in books go about their daily lives in spite of the grotesque aftermath; wanting to “decorate the dungeon with flowers...” (Woolf, 86) just as humans are inclined to do: “the war is over; there is no reason to dwell on the horrors of the past.” How can people love life when life can be so cruel? But to forget the past is to create a miserable future. We are fools if we do not educate the next generation on the wicked ways of man, and indeed we are fools if we tell our future that life is not worth living because of those ways. It is our challenge to find that gray area in our black and white situation—to demonstrate a love for life, while also acknowledging the insanity and error of human action. It should be for the resolution of hatred, ignorance, and the betterment of the world for our children that we should love life. We should have optimism toward it. For if we want to change something, if we want to change our lives and the world around us, we must care enough about it to put the energy into our want.

Margaret Atwood, the novelist who wrote *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *The Penelopiad*, and a recent trilogy of dystopian novels, claims that all writers are optimists. They have to be. They have to write the book, they have to believe they can write it, they have to believe they can publish it, and they have to believe that someone will read it. Woolf wrote *Mrs. Dalloway*, she published it, and many people have read it. Though the content and the message may seem grim, her optimism opened the door for conversation about what it means to be a fool; what does it mean to love life? This is what Woolf handed down to the future, this conversation: a conversation of human nature, a

continued on page 9...

Food *for* Thought

SURVIVAL

Tazmin Uddin

“Through humor, you can soften some of the worst blows that life delivers. And once you find laughter, no matter how painful your situation might be, you can survive it.”

Bill Cosby

“I believe the ability to think is blessed. If you can think about a situation, you can deal with it. The big struggle is to keep your head clear enough to think.”

Richard Pryor

“I teach people that no matter what the situation is, no matter how chaotic, no matter how much drama is around you, you can heal by your presence if you just stay within your center.”

Deepak Chopra

“Say and do something positive that will help the situation, it doesn’t take any brains to complain.”

Robert A. Cook

“Some people have such a talent for making the best of a bad situation that they go around creating bad situations so they can make the best of them.”

Jean Kerr

“When you’re in a situation, you can complain about it, you can feel sorry for yourself, you can do a lot of things.

But how are you gonna make the situation better?”

Tony Dungy

Ω

Fools Will Have Their Inheritance continued from page 8...

conversation about war, and a conversation about living in extremes. Woolf does not want the reader to forget the chaos—she wants us to understand that humans can be wretched—but she does not want us to lose our individual Clarissa Dalloway. This is what we should hand down to our inheritance. “For there she was” (Woolf, 213) at the very end. Ω

Upcoming *Literary* Events in Westchester & NYC

Alexa Chung

October 29, 2013, 8:00pm
Powerhouse Arena
37 Main St.
Brooklyn, NY. 11211
(718) 666-3049

American Muslim Women’s Association: Interfaith Movie & Exhibition

November 2-6, 2013 (Call for details)
ArtsWestchester
31 Mamaroneck Ave.
White Plains, NY. 10601
(914) 428-4220

Library: An Unquiet History

November 3, 1:30-3:00pm
Brooklyn Public Library
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY. 11238
(718) 230-2100

Lou Reed on Edgar Allen Poe

November 25, 2013, 7:00pm
NYPL Stephen A. Schwarzman Building
5th Ave, 42nd St.
New York, NY. 10018
(917) 275-6975
Cover: \$25.00

A special thank you to contributing artist Pash'a Ellis

Pash'a Ellis, School of Arts and Sciences, '14, is a Studio Arts major. She has studied a variety of media, and continues to challenge herself. Ellis's preferred materials are acrylic and charcoal. She is now working on her solo Senior Exhibit for next semester, and interning at ArtsWestchester, New York State's largest non-for-profit organization.

Artwork

Cover page: *Strength, Growth, Stability*

page 5: *At First Glance*

page 6: *Borderland*

Back cover: *Untitled sketch*

